

Claims

1. A fork lift truck (10) comprising a truck body (12), a lift mechanism (14) connected to the truck body (12) by means of a vertically extending pivot (52) and means (24) for turning the lift mechanism (14) relative to the truck body (12) about said pivot (52) to steer the truck (10), the truck body (12) having a pair of rear ground engaging wheels (16) mounted on transverse axes, the lifting mechanism (14) having a single ground engaging front wheel (40) mounted centrally on a transverse axis, characterised in that the front wheel (40) has independent drive means (44, 46).
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2. A fork lift truck (10) according to claim 1 characterised in that the lifting mechanism (14) may be pivoted to the truck body (12) at a steering angle of substantially 90° or more.
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3. A fork lift truck (10) according to claim 1 or 2 characterised in that the front wheel (40) is positioned forwardly of the pivot connection (52) between the truck body (12) and the lifting mechanism (14).
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4. A fork lift truck (10) according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that the front wheel (40) is positioned as far forward as possible towards the load bearing part (36) of the lifting mechanism (14).
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5. A fork lift truck (10) according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that independent drive means (60,62;72,74) are provided to drive each of the rear wheels (16).
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6. A fork lift truck (10) according to claim 5 characterised in that the drive means (60,62;72,74) for the rear wheels (16) are connected to a power source (64;76), so that the rear wheels (16) may be driven automatically at different speeds.
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7. A fork lift truck (10) according to claim 5 characterised in that the drive means (60,62;72,74) for the rear wheels (16) are connected to a power source (64;76) in a manner which will permit power to be diverted automatically from the rear inside wheel (16) to one or more of the other 5 wheels (16,40), in accordance with the steering angle.

8. A fork lift truck (10) according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that the or each wheel (16,40) is driven independently by an hydraulic or an electric motors (44,60,62;70,72,74).

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9. A fork lift truck (10) according to claim 8 characterised in that the motor (44) is connected to the wheel (40) by a gearbox (46).

10. A fork lift truck according to claim 8 or 9 characterised in that the 15 motor (44) and/or gearbox (46) is built partially into a hub of the wheel (40).

11. A fork lift truck according to any one of claims 8 to 10 characterised in that the power for the motors (44,60,62;70,72,74) is provided by an engine (80) driven generator or hydraulic pump (76,78), or by a battery pack 20 (64).

12. A fork lift truck according to claim 11 characterised in that the engine (80) is an internal combustion engine powered by fuel gas.